

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W
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P R 201145Z AUG 75
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5097
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 5303

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CASC, UNHCR, VS, US, FR
SUBJECT: AMCITS IN SVN AND REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE

SUMMARY. UNHCR HANOI REPRESENTATIVE TOLD EMBASSY AUGUST 19 HE HAD WHAT HE CONSIDERS RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT AMERICANS CAPTURED IN BAN ME THOUT MID-MARCH HAVE BEEN OR SOON WILL BE MOVED TO SAIGON AND THAT THERE IS IN PRINCIPLE NO RPT NO OBSTACLE TO THEIR LEAVING SVN. HE ALSO SAID HE HAD OBTAINED DRV FOREIGN MINISTRY CONFIRMATION THAT, DESPITE RECENT STATEMENT BY DO XUAN OANH IN JAPAN, IT WANTS UNHCR TO CONTINUE WORK OF TRANSPORTING GOODS AND PASSENGERS. HE REQUESTED USG REACTION TO IDEA OF HIS PROPOSING TO DRV/PRG EARLY RETURN OF 13 "DRUGGED" VIETNAMESE AS A GROUP, IN HOPE OF SPEEDING UP REPATRIATION IN GENERAL. UNHCR REPS INTEND CONCENTRATE NEXT FEW DAYS ON ORGANIZING SAIGON-HONG KONG FLIGHTS, WHILE FRENCH CONTINUE SEPARATE SAIGON-BANGKOK AIRLIFT (WHICH HAS CAUSED UNHCR SOME AGGRAVATION).
END SUMMARY.

1. UNHCR SAIGON REPRESENTATIVE-DESIGNATE ALEXANDRE CASELLA AND HANOI REPRESENTATIVE DARRYL NYUN HAN MET SEPARATELY WITH POL COUNSELOR AUGUST 19. THE TWO HAD
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MADE SAIGON FLIGHT TOGETHER PREVIOUS DAY AND WERE TO

LEAVE VIENTIANE AUGUST 20 FOR HANOI, CASELLA FOR A FEW DAYS TO COORDINATE SAIGON-HONG KONG FLIGHTS AND HAN FOR LONGER STAY WHICH IS TO INCLUDE ROAD TRIP TO HUE AND DA NANG WITH TWO UNICEF REPS STATIONED HANOI AND RETURN THERE IN TIME FOR DRV NATIONAL DAY OBSERVANCES CULMINATING SEPTEMBER 2.

2. MORE SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION CAME FROM HAN. HE SAID THAT IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION WITH LOW-LEVEL SOURCE WHO NEVERTHELESS HAS GOOD ACCESS TO HIGHER-LEVEL DELIBERATIONS AND WHOM HE HAS FOUND TO BE RELIABLE (INTERPRETER FOR PRG REPRESENTATION IN HANOI), SOURCE SAID IT WAS PRG POLICY TO PERMIT ALL FOREIGNERS WHO WISH TO LEAVE VIET NAM TO DO SO, AND THROUGH SAIGON. SOURCE LATER CONFIRMED SPECIFICALLY THAT THIS WOULD APPLY TO "MISSIONARIES CAPTURED AT BAN ME THUOT", AND HAN GAINED IMPRESSION BAN ME THUOT GROUP WOULD BE MOVED TO SAIGON SHORTLY IF NOT MOVED ALREADY. HAN ADDED AS PERSONAL OPINION THAT HE FORESAW NO RPT NO DIFFICULTY OVER EVENTUAL DEPARTURE OF SCARBOROUGH, MILLER FAMILY AND OTHERS FROM BAN ME THUOT NOT RPT NOT CONNECTED WITH USG BUT THOUGHT PRG MIGHT RPT MIGHT TRY TO POSE SOME CONDITIONS WHEN IT CAME TO USAID OFFICER PAUL STRUHARIK.

3. HAN DID NOT RPT NOT BROAD CASE OF JAMES F. LEWIS OF CONSULATE NHA TRANG IN CONVERSATION WITH INTERPRETER BUT EXPECTS OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO WITH PRG OFFICIALS DURING LENGTHY CAR TRIP NEXT WEEK. HE TOOK WITH HIM LIST OF 67 AMCITS KNOWN/BELIEVED TO BE IN SVN, COMPILED HERE ON BASIS HONG KONG 9468, STATE 188924 AND PREVIOUS, WITH CAVEAT THAT AT LEAST THREE AMCITS WHOSE NAMES WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED REPORTEDLY CAME OUT OF SAIGON ON FRENCH AIRLIFT WEEK OF AUGUST 11. POL COUNSELOR ALSO CITED POINT THAT THE REV. JOHN W. TABOR AND ALEXANDER J. KNOWLES WERE LAST HEARD OF IN DA NANG (STATE 180112) AND SUGGESTED HAN TRY TO DETERMINE THEIR WHEREABOUTS WHEN IN DA NANG HIMSELF. (HAN CONFIRMED IN PASSING THAT DR. TOM HOSKINS, AFSC, HAD LEFT DA NANG FOR SAIGON.) COMMENT: INFO IN THIS AND PRECEDING PARAGRAPH MUST RPT MUST BE STRICTLY PROTECTED. HAN CONFIDENTIAL

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HAS NOT RPT NOT CONFIDED PARA 2 INFO EVEN TO HIS UNHCR TEAM-MATE CASELLA, AND HE HAS ASKED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT FACT OF HIS INQUIRIES ON OUR BEHALF BE CONFINED TO USG OFFICIALS.

4. HAN ALSO SAID THAT, ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM GENEVA, HE MADE IMMEDIATE INQUIRY TO DRV FOREIGN MINISTRY ABOUT REMARKS REPORTEDLY MADE IN JAPAN CIRCA AUGUST 6 BY

DRV OFFICIAL DO XUAN OANH, WHO LED DRV DELEGATION TO A-BOMB ANNIVERSARY CEREMONIES, TO EFFECT THAT USG WOULD HAVE TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH DRV/PRG ON REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE AND THAT UNHCR COULD NOT SERVE AS INTER-MEDIARY. (WE CANNOT LOCATE HERE OANH'S TEXT OR ANY AUTHORITATIVE ACCOUNT OF HIS REMARKS.) DRV FOREIGN MINISTRY REP TOLD HAN THAT, WHILE OANH'S REMARKS WERE NOT RPT NOT UNOFFICIAL, DRV/PRG WERE IN FACT SATISFIED WITH UNHCR'S CURRENT ROLE IN FLYING SUPPLIES INTO HANOI AND SAIGON AND FLYING PASSENGERS OUT OF LATTER AND TRUSTED UNHCR WOULD CONTINUE (WHICH OF COURSE IT INTENDS TO DO). AT NO RPT NO TIME, HOWEVER, HAS HAN BEEN ABLE TO GET INDICATION WHEN DRV/VPRG MIGHT PERMIT UNHCR TO BEGIN FLYING REPATRIATES BACK TO SAIGON IN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS, AND BOTH HE AND CASELLA ARE CONVINCED DRV/PRG WILL CONTINUE CASE-BY-CASE EXAMINATION OF DOSSIERS. HAN CONCLUDED THAT OANH'S REMARKS REPRESENTED FURTHER DRV/PRG AND OTHER SUBJECTS BUT DID NOT RPT NOT REPRESENT ANY CHANGE IN ATTITUDE TOWARD UNHCR EFFORTS PER SE.

5. CASELLA EARLIER GAVE SAME INTERPRETATION AND ADDED TYPICAL PERSONAL TWIST: SINCE UNHCR HAS NEVER SERVED AS INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS BUT INSTEAD REPRESENTS ALL UN MEMBER-GOVERNMENTS, THAT PORTION OF OANH'S STATEMENT WAS IRRELEVANT.

6. BOTH HAN AND CASELLA FOCUSSED ON CASE OF 13 VIETNAMESE ALLEGEDLY DRUGGED AT UTAPAO WHEN THEY REFUSED TO BE FLOWN TO GUAM AND COULD NOT STAY IN THAILAND. UNHCR REPS BELIEVE THIS CASE CUTS BOTH WAYS FOR DRV/PRG; WHILE IT GIVES VIETNAMESE GOOD PROPAGANDA THEME, IT ALSO UNDERCUTS THEIR ARGUMENTS THAT WOULD-BE REPATRIATES ON GUAM AND ELSEWHERE ARE INSINCERE OR SUSPECT. CASELLA
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